

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. An automated package pick-up and delivery station
2 comprising:
3 a housing;
4 at least one information input system coupled to the housing to
5 receive shipping and identification information;
6 at least one package portal located in the housing and arranged to
7 receive and dispense packages, the portal including an access control arrangement
8 to secure a received package within the housing; and
9 a controller coupled to the at least one information input system and
10 the access control arrangement of the at least one package receiving and dispensing
11 portal, wherein the controller is arranged to associate package and intended recipient
12 identification information with a received package, and control operation of the
13 access control arrangement to permit depositing of the package into the at least one
14 package portal, the controller also being arranged to process identification
15 information to authenticate identity of an intended recipient, and to control operation
16 of the access control arrangement to permit dispensing of the package from the at
17 least one portal.
- 1 2. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the at least one package portal comprises a plurality of locker
3 compartments.
- 1 3. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 2 wherein the access control arrangement comprises a door and an electronically
3 controllable latch mechanism connected to each locker compartment.
- 1 4. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the at least one package portal comprises a plurality of package receiving
3 and dispensing bays.

1 5. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 4 wherein the access control arrangement comprises a door and an electronically
3 controllable latch mechanism connected to each receiving and dispensing bay.

1 6. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 4 further comprising an automated package transport mechanism operated by the
3 controller to automatically transport a package deposited into the portal to a
4 designated bin holder located within the housing.

1 7. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 6 wherein the automated package transport mechanism is further arranged to be
3 operated by the controller to transport a package from a bin holder to a designated
4 portal for dispensing therefrom.

1 8. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the at least one package portal comprises a plurality of portals having
3 different size dimensions.

1 9. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the controller is arranged to send and receive identification and
3 authentication information to a remote central data collection system.

1 10. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the at least one information input system comprises a data reader device
3 arranged to read information from a credit/debit card.

1 11. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the at least one information input system comprises a touch screen display
3 device.

1 12. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the at least one information input system comprises a receiver for
3 receiving signals transmitted by a portable wireless data transmitter.

1 13. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 further comprising a video conferencing system connected to the controller for
3 allowing an individual present at the housing to communicate with an off-site
4 attendant.

1 14. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 1 wherein the at least one information input system comprises a biometric input
3 device.

1 15. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 14 wherein the biometric input device comprises an iris scanner.

1 16. The automated package pick-up and delivery station of claim
2 14 wherein the biometric input device comprises a fingerprint scanner.

1 17. A method for automating package pick-up and delivery, the
2 method comprising:
3 associating package recipient information with a storage location and
4 associated package within a package pick-up and delivery station;
5 collecting biometric information from a potential package recipient;
6 comparing the biometric information with the package recipient
7 information to determine if a recipient is authorized to receive a package; and
8 automatically allowing access to the storage location if the biometric
9 information indicates the recipient is authorized to receive the package.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of collecting
2 biometric information comprises collecting iris pattern information from the
3 potential package recipient.

1 19. The method of claim 17 wherein the step of collecting
2 biometric information comprises collecting fingerprint information from the
3 potential package recipient.